

It is important to note that her excellent performance, distinguished service, and good cheer paved the way for more African Americans to secure appointments in the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and other important House institutions earning her the respect and friendship of her colleagues and, of course, Members of Congress.

She has a wonderful family, including her son John Mayes, III, who works for the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and David, who works for the Department of Homeland Security; and her daughter, Tira, who is a forensic specialist. You know she has done well at home and well here in the House of Representatives. Her children have learned from her. Her grandchildren will benefit from her. I am delighted to indicate that we have introduced a resolution, H. Res. 444, into the House RECORD to honor Nikki Mayes.

I am delighted to say that we honor you and appreciate you for 36 years of service and being a pioneering woman of service and an African American woman who led for others. Thank you so very much.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay to tribute to the remarkable accomplishments of Nicarsia Mayes, a Capitol Hill trailblazer and the first African-American woman to serve as a Doorkeeper of the House of Representatives.

Nicarsia Mayes began her career of service to the House of Representatives and the people of the United States on September 7, 1977, when she was hired on the recommendation of Congressman Augustus Hawkins of California as an elevator operator and entrusted to operate the last "Members Only" manual elevator.

In 1980, Nicarsia Mayes, or "Nikki," as she was affectionately known, was hired as a staff member of the then Office of the Doorkeeper, the first African-American woman ever hired by that office.

In 1994, Nikki joined the staff of the Office of the Sergeant at Arms, serving as a member of the Chamber Security Division until her retirement in 2013.

Mr. Speaker, Nikki's excellent performance, distinguished service, professionalism, and good cheer paved the way for more African Americans to secure appointments in the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and other important House institutions, earned her the respect and friendship of her colleagues, and endeared her to Members of Congress.

This month, December 2013, Nikki Mayes retires after 36 years of faithful, honorable, and distinguished service to the United States House of Representatives and the people of the United States.

I know my colleagues join me in extending our thanks and appreciation to Nikki for her service to our nation and our very best wishes for a happy and productive retirement.

I know how much she is looking forward to spending more time with her family, including her sons John Mayes III, who works for the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and David, who works for the Department of Homeland Security; and her daughter, Tira, who is a forensic specialist with the District of Columbia Metropolitan Police Department.

Inspired by her example, each of Nikki's children learned the value of helping others

and chose a public service career. That is perhaps the greatest testament to the character of this great public servant.

Mr. Speaker, Nicarsia "Nikki" Mayes is a wonderful human being, a great friend, and one of the finest public servants I have the honor to know. She will be greatly missed but not ever forgotten.

PASS COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

(Mr. SWALWELL of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, earlier this evening, this Congress defied a rocky trajectory that has defined the past year of government shutdowns and starting with the fiscal cliff by passing a 2-year compromise budget deal. I worked with you, Mr. Speaker, and others in our bipartisan United Solutions Caucus to support this bipartisan compromise, knowing that it is not the deal that ideally I would want. It doesn't do enough to restore Head Start funding or NIH funding, but it is a compromise and it is a step forward.

Now I am asking my colleagues in this Chamber, let's build on this momentum. Today I am ending a 24-hour fast for comprehensive immigration reform. I will end it in about one hour. Let's come back in January and do the right thing for the people in our country who are living in the shadows, the undocumented immigrants; and let's finally pass comprehensive immigration reform and build on the momentum we showed we can do tonight.

TRIBUTE TO NICARSIA MAYES ON HER RETIREMENT

(Mrs. CHRISTENSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I also rise to pay tribute to a very special lady, Nicarsia "Nikki" Mayes, the first African American woman to serve as a doorkeeper of the House of Representatives. She started her service in September of 1977 and after today will retire after 36 years of service.

She has always served every day with a warm smile, pleasant greeting, encouraging and kind words, and the highest level of professionalism. So we want to just say tonight that we thank you for your 36 years of excellent service to the House of Representatives and to all of us, and wish you a wonderful retirement.

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UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

(Ms. SHEA-PORTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I am going to read a letter that I re-

ceived from a constituent who is about to have her unemployment benefits cut. I quote:

Now that I am laid off and older, I am having difficulty finding a job. I understand now I cannot get unemployment extension. I have never collected anything in my life. So now what? I am going to be homeless. I do not qualify for anything because I made too much money. I have spent my savings, applied for 500-plus jobs to an aimless black hole. What am I going to do? A homeless shelter? My credit is damaged and soon I will not pass a background check. I do not qualify for retraining programs, et cetera, because I have excellent skill sets. All I hear is I am in a perfect storm, "Sorry, you are not alone."

I have been a productive member of society for many years and do not consider myself a "taker." How many unemployed will lose their homes, dignity, and hope? I wanted you to know.

So, to my constituent, I do know and Americans know. It was wrong to leave without fixing this problem.

TRIBUTE TO NICARISA MAYES

(Ms. LEE of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, in addition to saluting and congratulating our colleague and friend, Congressman MEL WATT, I want to rise and salute our friend Nikki Mayes tonight.

Nikki, I just have to say to you first of all, I was a staffer for Ron Dellums when I first met Nikki, and I know tonight Ron would want to salute you, congratulate you, and thank you so much for your 36 years of service. So on behalf of Ron Dellums and myself, let me just say what a great role model you have been for all of us.

I also want to thank you for helping us navigate this great institution. We will always remember you. We will cherish your friendship. And I want to say to you that, as you start this new chapter of your life, I hope you get some rest and I hope you have a lot of fun.

Thank you, again, Nikki.

HOLIDAY GREETING TO OUR TROOPS

(Mrs. BUSTOS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank all of our brave heroes who are serving overseas and are not home with their families this holiday season. While most of us will be returning to our homes to celebrate with family and friends, let us not forget all of the men and women serving our country who will not be able to be with their loved ones.

My region of Illinois is home to thousands of veterans who have served honorably in wartime and peacetime. It is also home to many Active Duty servicemembers, National Guard members, and Ready Reservists.

I was heartened to learn recently that the Peoria-based Army National